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ABSTRACT

The State University of New York comprises four formal coordinating areas for the development of regional contacts and interinstitutional and regional ccoperation. The four coordinating areas have been operating since 1972 and the differing patterns of ccoperation that have emerged are outlined as are the formal activities of each area. Only one of the four areas has been reasonably active in promoting regionalism with regular meetings, active groups in art and cultural affairs, instructional resources, Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research, library, summer session, and alumni. A survey was conducted in the fall of 1975 of all state operated campuses and community colleges on the topic of regionalism. The usable responses indicated several general conclusions, which are analyzed: (1) some form of interinstitutional dialog is generally endorsed; (2) coordinating areas are preferred over interinstitutional cooperation, which is preferred over consortial contacts; (3) formal agreements for ccoperation are differentiated from informal ones; (4) the extent of involvement with regional activities produces differentiated views about regional activities; (5) differences among types of colleges are not as strong as might have been expected; and (6) regionalism is generally supported throughout the state system, but not to the point where campuses are willing to devote resources that might otherwise be spent on campus activities. (JMF)

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January 1977

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REGIONALISM AND STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, 1972-76

This paper reports the general results from 1972 to 1976 of an effort to establish regional activities as an integral part of the State University of New York. Results of a surve conducted among the presidents of the 62 institutions which comprise SUNY are also reported.

A. Background

Coordinating Areas

Pursuant to Executive Order 44 of 1971, State University of New York established four formal coordinating areas. These coordinating areas comprise roughly the western part of the State, the south-central part, a long thin area stretching from the Canadian border to the mid-Hudson in the East, and finally suburban and urban Manhattan Long Island. Each area contains one University Center and a variety of other campuses--Liberal Arts, Specialized, Agricultural and Technical. Each also includes some Community Colleges which, though under the jurisdiction of local boards, also receive partial State support and are coordinated programmatically by State University.

The University strongly encouraged the development of regional contacts and published an initial report which highlighted the extent of already existing interinstitutional and regional cooperation. There was considerable hope that regionalism, though not becoming an additional bureaucratic layer, would definitely help the campuses share resources and facilitate the movement of students among different types of institutions. The 1972 Master Plan said about regionalism:

"The State University will continue to organize itself regionally into four major coordinating areas and to develop sub-regions within each area as educational and administrative needs so determine. The regional efforts of the University will focus on three basic goals: (1) more efficient and effective use of educational resources, (2) a better pattern of student admission and mobility, and (3) improved public service to meet community and regional needs. Councils composed of all campus Presidents in a region will be responsible for determining overall regional policy and will give general impetus to cooperative endeavors."

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It's significant that the 1976 Master Plan had no section on regionalism at all.

In each coordinating area, quite a different pattern emerged. In the western part of the State, which has always been geographically and culturally distinct, a strong pattern of interinstitutional cooperation did, in fact, develop. The presidents meet regularly,

as do the academic vice presidents. Functional groups such as librarians meet less frequently. The area has sponsored a workshop for department chairmen and has published a directory of performing artists willing to visit other campuses.

In the initial year of regionalism, Coordinating Area IV, the second most active area, sponsored more formal meetings among presidents and other representatives within the area than any other coordinating area. These meetings produced a number of proposals, most of them requiring considerable investment of additional resources. Only one of the proposals--for a survey of vocational and technical programs and their suitability to handicapped students--was eventually funded. The area did produce an admissions brochure for prospective students to give them an awareness of the richness of offerings among the campuses in the area, but by early 1975 the presidents no longer met on a regular basis and any identifiable coordinating area activities had virtually ceased.

Neither the central area nor the eastern area ever produced any projects of significance, with the possible exception of a small effort generated by the biologists of the central area.

One additional project was nominally a regional project, though it met with mixed success. A separate contract with the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research of the University of Michigan was negotiated for Coordinating Areas I, II and III. This contract provided for the provision of social scientific data from the University of Michigan to the University Center in each Coordinating Area. Thereafter, it was assumed that a regional network around the University Center, which included other colleges in the area, would further disseminate the data and make it available for teaching and research. Unfortunately, the degree of communication between University Centers and the other colleges varied considerably and as the relative cost of participation climbed, many colleges, beginning with the Community Colleges and Specialized Colleges, began to drop out of participation in the ICPSR contract. In mid-1976 a new contract was negotiated for the University as a whole within which three University Centers and Liberal Arts Colleges only would participate. Each Coordinating Area was encouraged to retain some involvement but no longer was central to the program.

The four Coordinating Areas have been operating since 1972, generally with a president from one of the campuses within the region designated as chairman of each region. Coordinating Area IV, for almost two years, had a part-time coordinator. Coordinating Area I has, for the past two years, been assisted by a graduate assistant who has helped the chairman of the region with regional activities. Coordinating Areas I, II and III each had regional contracts with the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan through which data in the political and social sciences was made available to centers and colleges within the region.

Consortia

Fifteen State-operated colleges of State University and nine community colleges are members of seven formally recognized consortia. The consortia are: Associated Colleges of the Mid-Hudson Area; Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley; Five Associated University Libraries; Hudson-Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities; Long Island Regional Advisory Council on Higher Education; Rochester Area Colleges, Inc.; and Western New York Consortium of Higher Education, Inc. Campuses which are members of consortia request annual authorization of expenditure of funds for consortial affairs. Such an authorization is included in the Executive Budget.

Interinstitutional Cooperation

Numerous formal and informal agreements exist between campuses and contribute to the interinstitutional cooperation of State University of New York. A review of a number of campus master plan statements (not complete) shows that among twenty-eight campuses there are 160 examples of formal and 40 examples of informal interinstitutional cooperation.

B. Activities Since 1972

Formal activities in the coordinating areas are virtually non-existent in Coordinating Areas III and IV. The only visible activity in Coordinating Area II has been the work of a small group of biologists. Coordinating Area I is the only truly active area. Within it there are regular meetings of the presidents and academic vice presidents, as well as active groups in art and cultural affairs, instructional resources, Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, library, summer session, and alumni. Area I produces informative annual reports, has published an arts resources directory, and has given regional attention to such important subjects as enrollment trends, intercollegiate athletics, a computer usage plan, program review, and joint degree programs.

It is more difficult to assess the effect of consortial programs on State University, since independent colleges and universities are involved as well. Some of the activities reported by the consortia directors are:

- meetings of faculty groups and business-related groups; a listing of career counselors; publication of a newsletter; an arts festival; health care education (Hudson-Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities).

- coordinated calendar of events; residencies in dance and music; a cooperative course on the Hudson River, its history and ecology; planning for a cooperative womens' studies program; establishment of a voluntary group team life insurance program; conferences on career and liberal education; arts administration; and counseling of adults (Associated Colleges of the Mid-Hudson Area).

- cooperative computering; establishment of video and film libraries; artists in residence programs; study of the feasibility of establishing a cooperative continuing education unit (Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley).

- publication of a student recruitment brochure; support for a volunteer community service program; a cooperative continuing education project (The Long Island Regional Advisory Council on Higher Education).

- cooperative borrowing; priority interloan and video copy service; publication and updating of joint bibliographic activities; provision of on-line cataloging services; planning for cooperative storage facilities; access to subject-related data bases (Five Associated University Libraries).

C. Costs

Regionalism is at present definitely not a high-cost activity, at least as far as the formal coordinating areas are concerned. Direct costs in the coordinating areas are limited to support for an assistant in Coordinating Area I ($4,300), support to biologists in Coordinating Area II ($1,000), and ICPSR activities (ranging from $7,500 in the past to $14,000 at present).* Thus the total direct costs of regionalism have been somewhere between $10,000 and $20,000 per year. The indirect costs made up of staff assistance in central administration, the preparation of a cross registration report, and the time devoted by staff to regional activities in the coordinating areas, might be estimated at around $15,000 per year.

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* ICPSR activities have been exclusively regional until the Summer of 1976. Commencing then they will be partly regional but will primarily be a part of a University-wide contract.

The cross registration activities are a particularly interesting example of costs and benefits. Cross registration has been allowed at the undergraduate level only between State University campuses which have received explicit approval for such cross registration and nearby independent colleges. In 1974-75, for example, approvals were given to 23 State University campuses, resulting in 885 student enrollees and 1,180 course registrations to and from State University with independent colleges. We estimate that the cost of maintaining the data on cross registration is $1,350 per year. This yields a marginal cost of $1.53 per student involved, and $1.14 per credit hour generated, and can be compared with a figure of $2,516, which we estimate to be the total "savings" to State University of the excess of registrations out versus registrations in.

The costs of consortia are more readily apparent. For the year 1976-77, 24 campuses have received approval to contribute $146,000 to seven consortia. This amount will be reduced during the budgetyear 1977-78 because several campuses have withdrawn from consortia, and in some cases consortia membership fees have been reduced.

D. The Survey

In the fall of 1975 a survey (Attachment A) was distributed to presidents of all State-operated campuses and Community Colleges. Eventually forty-seven usable responses were received, three from University Centers, ten from Liberal Arts Colleges, six from Agricultural and Technical Colleges, two from Medical Centers, five from Specialized and Statutory Colleges, and twenty-one from Community Colleges. Of these responses, seven came from Coordinating Area I, thirteen from Coordinating Area II, eleven from Coordinating Area III, thirteen from Coordinating Area IV, and three were undesignated.

1. General conclusions of the survey. Based on the analysis which is more thoroughly presented below, the following conclusions were drawn from the survey responses.

   a. Collectively the campuses do endorse some form of interinstitutional dialogue on a wide variety of program issues.

   b. Of the available forms, coordinating areas seem to be preferred as the arena for actual programs more than interinstitutional cooperation, which is, in turn, preferred more than consortial contacts.

   c. Campuses differentiate interinstitutional cooperation which requires formal agreement from that which should be carried on informally.

   d. The extent of involvement with regional activities does produce differentiated views about regional activities. More involvement usually means a more favorable attitude toward regionalism.

   e. Differences among types of colleges are not as strong as might have been expected, though on the whole liberal arts colleges are more supportive of regionalism than community colleges.

   f. Regionalism is generally supported throughout the State University of New York, but not to the point where campuses would be willing to devote resources to regionalism which might otherwise be spent on campus activities.

2. Analysis

   a. Questions 1 through 15 of the questionnaire list a number of actual or potential activities which might be carried out in a regional arena. Respondents were given an opportunity to say whether they thought the activity should be given some regional emphasis; in what arena (coordinating areas, consortia, interinstitutional cooperation) it should be carried out; and in what form (formal or informal).

There appears to be general support for interinstitutional dialogue on a wide range of program issues. Three-quarters or more of the respondents felt that four activities should be given some regional emphasis or expanded in their present form. They are:

- transfer agreements;
- meetings among staff with similar functions (librarians, personnel officers, registrars, etc.);
- meetings of faculty members by disciplines;
- meetings of faculty and staff on functional topics (improvement of teaching, needs of e.g. new clienteles).

Four were similarly listed by two-thirds or more of the respondents:

- one-plus-one programs;
- new program review;
- review of program reductions or consolidation;
- resource sharing.

An additional two were listed by half or more of the respondents:

- development of regional informational systems;
- joint appointments.

When given a choice of the arena in which the fifteen activities should occur, the respondents felt that nine would be most appropriately carried out in coordinating areas, and five through interinstitutional cooperation. Two were equally listed between those two arenas. In no case were consortia listed as the most appropriate arena.

The respondents felt that eight of the activities should be organized in a formal way and five left to informal arrangements. For two activities, there seemed to be no preference for formality or informality.

These general findings are summarized in the following table. (See Attachment A for more complete results.)

Preferred Form	Arena*		
	Coordinating Areas	No Preference	Interinstitutional Cooperation
Formal	ICPSR (42)** Information systems (55) Survey student interests (38)	Transfer (80) Regional degrees (42)	One-plus-one (67) Joint appointments (53) University-wide degrees (40)
Even (No Preference)	New program review (66)		Resource sharing (72)
Informal	Program reductions (68) Staff meetings by function (81) Faculty meetings by discipline (77) Faculty meetings by functional topics (75)	Public information (49)	

* Consortia are not listed because they were not the preferred arena for any program.

** Figures in parentheses denote the percentage of respondents who said that the activity could be given some regional emphasis or expanded in its present form.

In summary, of those principal activities for which two-thirds or more of the respondents said some regional emphasis should be given:

Formal organization is favored for transfer and one-plus-one agreements.

Informal organization is favored for program reduction and meetings of faculty and staff.

Either form seems suitable for new program review and resource sharing.

b. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of eighteen statements (questions 16 through 29 with question 19 having four sub-parts) on which the respondents could express an opinion ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The agree and strongly agree responses have been combined as have the disagree and strongly disagree responses. Below are presented the seven statements on which fifty per cent or more of the respondents expressed agreement and the four statements on which fifty per cent or more expressed disagreement. The percentage of those so responding is given in parentheses.

Pronounced agreement

22. Consortial arrangements are a more promising form of interinstitutional cooperation than coordinating areas (55%).

23. Direct agreements between campuses are a more promising form of interinstitutional cooperation than are coordinating areas (81%).

28. The concept of regionalism still holds significant promise for State University (54%).

16. The present degree of formal organization of State University's four coordinating areas is about right (63%).

19.b) State University should place more emphasis on regionalism for program review (54%).

19.d) State University should place more emphasis on regionalism for resource sharing to avoid duplication and overlap (69%).

20. Coordinating areas should be supported only in geographic areas where they appear viable and presently are working (65%).

Pronounced disagreement

29. Even with budgets as tight as they are, our campus would be willing to dedicate more of its resources to regional activities (assuming we have a choice in deciding what those activities are) (53%).

17. State University's four coordinating areas need more formal organization (72%).

19.a) State University should place more emphasis on regionalism for admissions (52%).

19.c) State University should place more emphasis on regionalism for budgeting (69%).

From the responses it's apparent that the presidents on the whole do not want a great deal more organization of regionalism, and they want to encourage regionalism only where it seems viable. Regionalism holds promise primarily in the areas of program review and the avoidance of resource duplication. (Somewhat paradoxically, in the second part of the questionnaire, direct agreements and consortia seem to come out more favorably than do coordinating areas, although in the first part of the questionnaire respondents seem to favor the use of coordinating areas as the primary

arenas for regionalism. It may be that in the first section present programs are the frame of reference, while presidents feel that in the long run both consortia and informal agreements are likely to be more significant, i.e., are more promising.)

Conversely, presidents do not want more organization and do not favor using regionalism for admissions and budgeting. They express a general lack of willingness to give up resources for regionalism which might be used elsewhere.

3. Area differences. Coordinating area I has been by far the most active regional area in State University. Consequently, it's not surprising that of the twenty-two responses which differentiated the opinions of the four coordinating areas, in twelve cases it is the opinions expressed by respondents from Coordinating Area I which stand out from the others.

In comparison with other regions, Coordinating Area I favors more regional activity for ICPSR-type agreements and one-plus-one agreements; is more enthusiastic about development of information systems and regional degrees; feels that the amount of organization is about right (and conversely does not want more organization or more explicit plans for regionalism). It is also more willing to consider regional coordination of admissions; wants less emphasis on budgeting; is more opposed to the redrawing of regional boundaries; is least enthusiastic about direct agreements as opposed to coordinating area activities; and is least willing to abolish regionalism.

Only Coordinating Area III, of the other regions, expresses any differentiated opinions. Respondents from that area are more enthusiastic than others about bringing the faculty together for functional reasons; developing a survey of student interests; fostering joint appointments; creating joint public information programs; engaging in program review; and resource sharing. Respondents from Coordinating Area III also favor a more explicit plan for regionalism and are more supportive of consortia than others.

On the two general questions--does regionalism still hold promise, and would the campuses devote resources to regionalism--all regions were remarkably similar in their responses.

4. College differences. The number of differences among the types of colleges appear to be less than might have been expected. Because of the distribution of responses it is difficult to compare the responses of all types of campuses. As a simplified way of testing differences, we looked at the differences between the responses of the liberal arts colleges (ten respondents) and those of the community colleges (twenty-one respondents).

On the basis of those responses, the liberal arts colleges emerge as somewhat more supportive of regionalism than the community colleges. There are marked differences in the willingness to consider joint appointments (an explainable difference given the local control of community colleges), and over the issue of providing more budgetary support to coordinating areas. In both cases the liberal arts colleges are more in favor. They are also more in favor of ICPSR-type arrangements; the meeting of staff on functional topics; the sharing of resources; the creation of regional degrees; are more willing to say that coordinating areas should be supported only in regions where they're viable; that boundaries should be redrawn; the conference of presidents should be organized in part on regional lines; and that regionalism holds promise. Liberal arts presidents would be willing to devote some of their resources to regionalism.

Community colleges, by contrast, seem to back faculty meetings on functional topics; creation of regional information systems; are more willing to use regionalism for program review; and like direct agreements rather than coordinating areas considerably more than the liberal arts colleges.

Attachment A

State University of New York
99 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12210

February 13, 1976

Dear Colleague:

In order better to support you in regional activities and to develop a sense for the future of regionalism in State University, I have prepared the accompanying opinion survey. It is being sent to all campus presidents. I would greatly appreciate your completing it and returning it to me by March 5 if at all possible.

The questionnaire has been prepared with the following definitions in mind. You might wish to refer back to them as you answer the questions.

Arenas of Regional Activity

Coordinating areas

1. Formal (Example: participation in a coordinating area contract for ICPR)
2. Informal (Example: informational meetings of AVPs or librarians)

Consortia

3. Formal (Example: membership in one of the seven recognized consortia)
4. Informal (Example: occasional meetings with nearby private colleges)

Interinstitutional cooperation

5. Formal (Example: one-plus-one, transfer or cross registration agreements)
6. Informal (Example: sharing of program information with another State University campus)

Thanks for your help.

Charles E. Neff
Assistant Chancellor
for Special Projects

Enclosure

A SURVEY OF REGIONALISM

A. Following are some actual or potential activities which might be pursued or expanded in one of the arenas of regionalism. Please indicate a) whether you think the activity should have a regional emphasis at all and b) where and in what form (formal or informal) the activity ought to be started or expanded. Some activities lend themselves to several regional arenas and forms so check as many boxes as seem to you appropriate.

	This activity should be given some regional emphasis or expanded in its present form.	Where and how should this new emphasis take place? (Do not check boxes below if you did not check the one to their left.)					
		Coordinating areas		Consortia		Interinstitutional cooperation	
		Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal
1. ICPR (Inter-University Consortium for Political Research) or similar arrangements which produce shared information of an academic nature.	43*	21*	9*	11*	2*	13*	4*
2. Transfer agreements	81	40	15	21	11	47	15
3. One-plus-one programs	66	26	9	15	4	40	11
4. New program review	66	32	28	11	11	11	15
5. Review of program reductions or consolidation	68	19	38	6	17	11	21

* Per cent "yes"

	This activity should be given some regional emphasis or expanded in its present form.	Where and how should this new emphasis take place? (Do not check boxes below if you did not check the one to their left.)					
		Coordinating areas		Consortia		Interinstitutional cooperation	
		Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal
6. Meetings among staff with similar functions (librarians, personnel officers, registrars, etc.	81 *	23 *	40 *	17 *	19 *	4 *	40 *
7. Meetings of faculty members by disciplines	77	13	51	15	23	9	34
8. Meetings of faculty and staff on functional topics (improvement of teaching, needs of e.g. new clienteles)	75	11	43	17	15	11	28
9. Development of regional informational systems	55	30	9	17	9	9	9
10. Surveys of potential student interest for use in program design	38	21	11	13	6	9	11
11. Resource sharing	72	19	21	13	19	21	32
12. Joint appointments	53	17	13	13	6	34	15
13. Public information programs	49	9	23	13	19	11	19

* Per cent "yes"

	This activity should be given some regional emphasis or expanded in its present form	Where and how should this new emphasis take place? (Do not check boxes below if you did not check the one to their left.)					
		Coordinating areas		Consortia		Interinstitutional cooperation	
		Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal
14. Development of regional degrees or programs	43	23	6	15	2	23	4
15. Development of University-wide degrees or programs	40	15	6	9	2	26	9

19

20

B. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know No Opinion
	Per cent				
16. The present degree of formal organization of State University's four coordinating areas is about right.	4	60	19	9	9
17. State University's four coordinating areas need more formal organization.	4	17	51	21	6
18. State University is in need of a more explicit plan for regionalism.	13	32	32	11	13
19. State University should place more emphasis on regionalism for:					
a) Admissions	4	28	28	26	15
b) Program review	9	47	17	17	11
c) Budgeting	2	15	38	32	13
d) Resource sharing to avoid duplication and overlap	21	49	6	11	13
20. Coordinating areas should be supported only in geographic areas where they appear viable and presently are working.	17	49	19	11	4

21

22

Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements..

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know or No Opinion
21. Coordinating area boundaries should be redrawn.	13	17	28	2	40
22. Consortial arrangements are a more promising form of inter-institutional cooperation than coordinating areas.	17	38	23	4	17
23. Direct agreements between campuses are a more promising form of interinstitutional cooperation than are coordinating areas.	19	64	13	0	4
24. Coordinating areas need more staff support.	4	36	28	13	19
25. Coordinating areas need more budgetary support.	9	38	26	11	17
26. Meetings of the conference of presidents should to some degree be organized on a regional basis.	40	13	36	11	0
27. The present coordinating areas should be abolished.	13	23	26	11	28
28. The concept of regionalism still holds significant promise for State University.	6	49	17	6	21
29. Even with budgets as tight as they are, our campus would be willing to dedicate more of its resources to regional activities (assuming we have a choice in deciding what those activities are)	2	30	36	17	15

C. Other comments (including specific suggestions for regional activities).

The views expressed in this questionnaire are:

70	*	Those of an individual
23		Reflective of general campus opinion (to the extent that one can judge such an opinion).
6		Unanswered.

The answers are supplied from a:

6	University center
21	Liberal arts college
13	Agricultural and technical college
4	Medical center
9	Specialized college
2	Statutory college
45	Community college

Which is located in:

26

Coordinating Area I	15	*
Coordinating Area II	28	
Coordinating Area III	23	
Coordinating Area IV	28	
Unanswered	6	

27

* Per cent